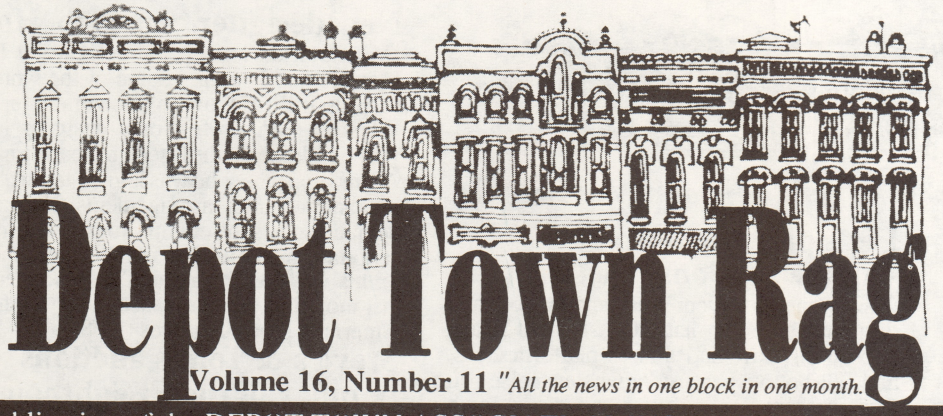


Depot Town Rag

Volume 16, Number 11 *"All the news in one block in one month."*

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

100% FREE
Rag Content
November 1993

- The 'French Connection'
- **"Teddy" hiding out?**
- Cady's name traced
- *High School memories*

and other strictly local stuff. . . .

Frieda Amman's passing marks end of an era

She spent nearly twenty years as a resident of the district's Masonic Block and was totally blind for most of that time. Before Frieda came to her apartment she was bartender at the old Royal Bar on Michigan Avenue (now the Elks, across from the Dairy Queen).

Many friends stopped by to visit in her time in Depot Town, but she was much harder to find in her last years at a local retirement home and she had very few of those neighborly visits in that lonely location. When she passed away last September at the Bortz Convalescent Home, Frieda was 89 years old.

There were no family members at her funeral, only a former housekeeper, a former landlord, the husband of her social worker, and a minister she never knew from the old neighborhood where she grew up in Ann Arbor. After she left Depot Town, most of her old friends couldn't find her any more. Some guessed that, from tales of her childhood, she might have been a Lutheran at one time.

Frieda's passing seemed to close the chapter on the generation of Depot Towners who lived above the abandoned stores and stayed in their rooms all day. Some were former railroaders, others were retired from the rigors of small business life in the district.

Few of today's inhabitants knew them, but we've all inherited the same love for this old block and now we've taken their places. The rents are a lot higher and the heat more regular. Some of the apartments are air conditioned and most of the drop ceilings have been removed. Life over the stores goes on — and the tradition continues into an unimagined future.

Thanks to Frieda and her generation, the district is still providing good homes and occupations for those who follow.

Last old billboard is gone; good bye, "Mail Pouch"

Fall colors arrive, stay all year

Last month saw a tremendous display of gorgeous colors in this block and the good news is: most of them will stay here all year 'round. The leaves are gone but the color remains.

• Just as the leaves began to turn, so did the colors on many of the neighborhood's historic buildings. The Newel Block - which is the home to Ike's Barbershop, Miller's Ice Cream and Emporium, and Depot Town Travel - endured enough curing of the summer's stucco repair that the new tones of light gray, dark grey and burgundy could be applied to the three story facade and east/west walls. Burgundy awnings will complete the picture.

[The "Mail Pouch" billboard which overlooked Ninde Street has been covered and each of the side walls now give a long view of fresh paint when entering the district. If locals thought that ancient advertising technique was special, even older residents can recall the days when the same space was filled with an ad for "Swamp Root," a popular patent medicine of the 19th century.]

• The street level of the Follett House, too, saw new colors applied just in time for the grand openings of Winding River Gallery and the expansion and move of the Remington/Walker Design Studio.

• Across the street again, the facade of the old Sinkule's Market was updated - or down-dated - and painted in a new gold/green combination. It's the first time in local history that a facade has been taken from one period to an earlier one. [See accompanying article on page 5]

• Earlier in the summer Depot Towners enjoyed the new hot red colors reappearing on the ancient caboose out back in the plaza.

Such applications of hues prove that not all the local color is to be found in the eccentricities of the district's inhabitants; some of it is architectural, as well.

DTA sets district's annual priorities, plans Victorian Holiday

District priorities two decades ago were different: Get the sidewalks paved. Remove the parking meters. Open up the Freighthouse. Pave some parking lots. Bricks and mortar stuff.

Only ten years ago they were more political: Start a Farmers' Market. Establish a Development Authority. Get signs up around town.

Recently they've included such things as: Rebuild the crossing guard tower. Increase foot traffic on the block. Hang banners on the poles.

Issues on the docket for 1994 were set at the October meeting under the able direction of DTA president Judi Monaghan:

Most important:
- Develop block advertising
- Greater diversity in new businesses

Very important:
- More television coverage
- More merchant involvement in district promotions
- Rebirth of jazz events with WEMU
- Broaden base of volunteers
- Expand and coordinate business hours

Also being considered:
- Bring back quarterly meetings
- Create more district tie-ins with Frog Island Jazz Festival
- Install a 'money machine' on the block

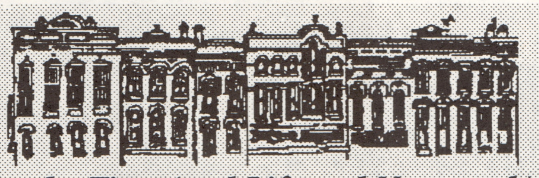
Worth looking into:
- Monthly events with shared responsibility by merchants
- Review DTA constitution & by laws

Items were first prioritized by 'willingness to help make it happen,' then by the old 'I'd like to see *somebody* do this.' Both responses are reflected in the above tally.

December 4's kick-off of the **Victorian Holiday** will coordinate with Farmers' Market plans and a flyer detailing more events is being prepared by Vice President Tommy Steele and Remington/Walker's Sandy Hoag. A Friday night event may come together, as well.

Now all it takes is the true committment of our neighbors to make it all happen. We've come a long way, babies! And the coming holiday season is a great opportunity to show what else we can do!

Dateline: Depot Town:



A Neighborhood Forgotten by Time (and Life and Newsweek)

Two storefronts available

It wasn't long ago that an *occupied* storefront was news in Ypsilanti's depot district but, today, it's just the opposite: Today, when there's a storefront *empty* and *available,* it's big news.

Sidetrack's former Depot Exchange is still under reconstruction and isn't really on the market for speculation, but there are two spots down the street just awaiting their next creative challenge.

- 16 East Cross, next to Shear Genius and once the home of Potpourri Gardens, is a tiny but popular spot and information is available at City Body Carstar from either of the Sobbry brothers.
- Across the street is another unique business location (formerly Nicolette's Knits) in the Heritage Square complex. Information on that property is available at the Teachers Shop.

Totally new concept for the truly laid-back afficianado of modern Victoriana:

Overnight lodging in the "Bed & *Lunch*" tradition. Maybe even "Couch and Lunch" accommodations? *It could happen*!

Let's play dress-up at the vintage fashions "Tea Party"

Everyone go to your attics and pull out and dust off those top hats, Chesterfield coats, Gibson Girl skirts and blouses, platform shoes, and bell-bottom pants — or whatever else you find in there — and come on down for a 'decades of fashion tea paearty.' Either bring, or better yet, wear your vintage outfit or item Sunday November 14, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., to The Daily Grind Coffee House, 21 E. Cross, for an informative and fun 'tea party'.

Lynn Radtke, our local vintage clothing expert from Apple Annie's Vintage Clothing will be on hand to give historical assessments of your attire. Those wanting an assessment need to sign up at the beginning of the party and take a number.

All are welcome. You need not be 'dressed' (a purposeful statement, hopefully understood by all). Bring a friend, dress up, or come as you are and enjoy a cup of your favorite tea and a scone.

New designer comes to Hon's

Mike Helton is the new designer at Hon's Flowers and is taking some of the work and responsibility from owner/manager, Joe Wizauer. A professional designer for 23 years, Mike spent the last eight years in an Ann Arbor shop where he was known for his 'modern' and 'abstract' arrangements. He's also in demand across the country for workshops and seminars in the floral design business and was on his way to Oklahoma City for a weekend last month to demonstrate and lecture for the American Floral Services (AFS).

Steve's & Tom's auctions popular in the Freighthouse

Steve Gross seems to be busier than ever, since he and Linda French closed their Depot Exchange Antiques business. He and Tommy Schmidt have expanded their auctioneering into a full-time business and, if the bargains at the October 23 event in the Freighthouse were any indication, they're the best in the business.

"We try to move a 350 lot in three and a half hours," says Steve, explaining that 'lot' is the group of items assembled for that day's auction. "Only the 'chatter' slows us down." But he's so good at it, no one ever complains.

Their next antique extravaganza in Depot Town will be the Friday after Thanksgiving, 26 November, with the bidding starting at 6:30 p.m. Public viewing will begin at noon.

Rental business so good, Clearing House out of work

For the past five years it's been the practice of Depot Town apartment owners to post available rentals with DTA's secretary or treasurer and keep a local listing available on the Clearing House Hot Line. Bettie Dodd, DTA treasurer, says, "It's just not feasible any more. There's such a demand and so few units available that, when people are moving out, there's already a line of new tenants to take their place. We really don't need to advertise them. Word of mouth is enough."

Is Theodore Roosevelt hiding out in Depot Town?

Cady's window sign asks for memorabilia from Ypsilanti High School, but there are indications that some of Roosevelt High School's past may be found here, too. Rooselvelt was the campus laboratory school at EMU/The Normal School and closed in the 1960's and many of the school's alumni found their way down to this block, as well. One of the most prized artifacts of that program was the photograph of Alice Roosevelt Longworth at the school's dedication in the 1920's.

She was the Alice in the song "Your Sweet Little Alice-Blue Gown," and was the granddaughter of the school's namesake, Theodore Roosevelt. In the photo, she's on the front porch of the school which then faced Forest Avenue. That part of the street has disappeared since then, but not all the Roosevelt memorabilia. Some of it's still around these local basements and attics.

Some old Ypsi-ites claimed to have been able to identify 'liberals' and 'conservatives' by the manner in which their pronounced the name of the school. Republicans, they claim, say "Rooo-si-velt," while Democrates pronounce it "Rose-evelt." The kids and staff at the school simply referred to him as "Teddy."

"Teddy" was spray painted copper-colored when last seen in public (c. 1967)

The school's library was dominated in those days by a plaster bust of the Rough Rider and it was a favorite senior prank to kidnap "Teddy" and hold him ransom for some prize such as a free day's usage of the school's 'senior stairs' or open access to the swimming pool for whichever class could retreive the statue from its captors.

Alas, the last class to swipe the plaster image was neither careful nor loyal to the tradition and "Teddy" was damaged. Over the years tradition said it had been repaired and was about to be donated to the Ypsilanti Historical Museum, but it never materialized. The mystery continued for twenty years - until "Teddy" stories began to surface in Depot Town.

Now, a district antiquer claims to have come across the local hero-image and seems to be teasing the alumni. He says he has the statue in his collection and is seeking someone to replicate the thing with a mold. With proper incentives - or threats - he may even be convinced to exhibit the work at Cady's - among the rival Ypsilanti High items.

Rooseveltians are encouraged to cajole for the return of "Teddy" to the town's history.

Ypsilanti's FARMERS' MARKET

11/20
Table-top Economy Bazaar
All crafts/gifts $10 or under

11/27
Community Tree Decorating
Help decorate the Market's 15' tree!

12/4
Holiday Bazaar!
Depot Town's annual Victorian Holiday weekend!
Wreaths, crafts, food

Live music *every* holiday Saturday

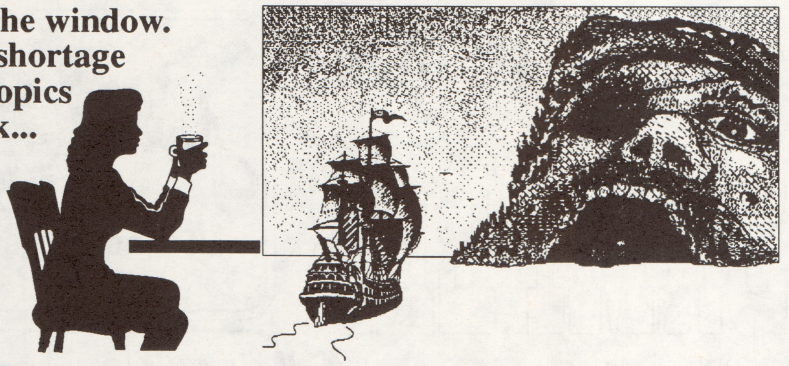
The Ypsilanti Area Dancers &
Ypsilanti Salvation Army Advisory Board
present the 25th Annual Children's Christmas Ballet:

THE NUTCRACKER

4 p.m. December 4
1:30 & 4 p.m. December 5
Ypsilanti High School Auditorium

Tickets: Adults $8, Children $3
Durant's & Salvation Army

Just sit by the window. There's no shortage of fantasy topics in this block...



Story tellers move inside, still find material here

One of the discoveries made in this place over nearly 18 years of monthly publication of *The Rag* is this: You don't have to go out of this block to find stories to write. Just sit where you can see the street and wait for the magic to fall on you. There is a story in every brick and window pane and everyone who stops to talk will tell their version of it. -ed.

With the passing of sidewalk café weather, Depot Towners have moved to the other side of the glass and the district's long story-telling tradition continues. (Not to imply a tradition of telling *long* stories, mind you. Most of them are short, conceptual tales; much too short for Garrison Keillor. More like sad jokes.)

This block's story tellers find their material simply by watching the diverse action on the street and the story-tellers are not limited to any specific age group.

There are the Old Geezers whose memories are jarred every time a train goes by. The noise and vibration challenge them to tell everything that's filed away about how "the railroads aren't what they used to be" and "I used to work on that train, you know" and therein lies a tale - or several that may seem disconnected unless you have heard them several times before.

Younger storytellers on this block can regale you with tales of adventure down at the Huron River and on Frog Island - usually tales for their peers told in hopes of their moms and dads not overhearing. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn and Becky Thatcher still live down by the depot in Ypsilanti.

More contemporary storytellers like to sit in the windows of the district's saloons, restaurants and coffee shops and will tell stories as long as anyone will listen. Some are conjured up by watching someone trying to parallel park their car. Others by merely watching a van unload. These wondrous stories run the gamut from gossip to folklore to heroic tales. Some are mysteries. There's an occasional poem. A few are jokes or puzzles.

Here's a collection of recent scenarios from recent tales told down by the tracks in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town:

•

"You should have seen it! Two couples turned on the fire hydrant and flooded the streets. They must have been drunk. The police came but didn't do anything. The water flooded the stores next to it, but ..."

•

"That's where they parked the box car that was loaded with brand new automobiles. Nobody traced it and it stayed on that siding for thirty years and,when they opened it up, they were instant collectors' items, each worth over a million dollars!"

•

"Who's that unloading the carpeting? What color is it? Where's the owner? What are they doing parking on the sidewalk? A guy died in there about twenty years ago."

•

"Did you see that old coat they found? It looked like a Civil War uniform. I figure the holes were caused by steel balls fired from a pistol and the solider survived the wounds and hid the coat in the floor boards. Maybe he was hiding out from the Union troops who were stationed across from the depot."

•

"There was a ladder put up to the window but no entry was reported. Maybe someone used it to get out, rather than in. Maybe they just forgot their key."

•

"I hear there's going to be a Ben & Jerry's ice cream outlet there. Do you think this block can sustain a franchise outlet? It's just not the way we do things here. Besides, we've got enough ice cream places."

•

"This whole place was built by Henry Ford. He wanted to move it to Dearborn, but it was too big, so they just left it here and now it passes for much older than it really is."

•

"Next year's theme is going to be famous people who grew up here. They're going to get some of them out of jail to lead the parade."

•

"See those gold hubcaps? That's the new prototype. When the plant opens again, Ford will own it and all the cars will be steam powered. You should buy stock in it."

•

"She's lived up there since 1928 and gets lots of mail from Pepsico. She came here straight from Willow Run Airport and her first name is Amelia..."

•

"All the buildings down here are connected by tunnels and they're filled with antiques. As soon as the 'country' fad is over, they're going to make a killing in the market."

•

"They used to do off-track betting here and there was a house of ill-repute upstairs. The hotel's hallways went all the way to the railroad tracks then and Ann Arbor wasn't even built yet..."

•

" And when it's really, really quiet very late at night, you can put your ear to the wall and hear a waltz ... being played on a harpsichord."

Sit by the window ... and listen to the stories of Depot Town. Tomorrow's novelists can still use today's legends. As the T-shirt slogan says, "I don't repeat gossip, so listen carefully the first time."

Grind's flavor captured in story-telling tradition

- an unsigned work...

Autumn is a season for reflection, a time to contemplate what the Romantics made a ritual of—experience! It conjures up harvest scenes where rituals of sharing are renewed and celebrated. Reflection and the binding of communal ties require a special meeting ground The community of Ypsilanti, Michigan has found such a place at The Daily Grind, a coffee shop in the heart of Depot Town. Nestled amidst a backdrop of historic storefronts — paled only by the spectacular wash of yellowing leaves along the curb — The Daily Grind's quaint exterior hearkens back to a time when sun and clock were on more even terms.

Located at 21 E. Cross St., several blocks from Eastern Michigan University, The Daily Grind occupies part of a once two-story Victorian hotel. Its high, stylized ceiling and dusky wood floor beckon a delicate, relaxed, turn-of-the century sensibility. As customers walk in they encounter a prominent glass case, replete with bottled juices, cheese cake, scones, muffins, brownies, and pecan pies. Above the pastries to the rear hangs a chalk board displaying drink specials and prices. Service is quick and unpretentious.

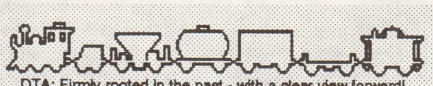
During the weekday morning and afternoon hours, Bill Peeper, the shop's manager, greets customers in a friendly, unassuming manner. Tall, lean, bespectacled, Bill looks more like a professor or starving intellectual than an enterprising businessman. "The shop's been in existence for a year now, and I'm still here. Fortunately for us, we're the only establishment that's a genuine coffee shop in the downtown Ypsilanti area," he reflects with a wry grin. "I had no prior experience in this business, but I plan on staying here a while." Who can blame him? Aside from the occasional WHOOSH spewing from the cappuccino machine, life at the Daily Grind is pretty laid back.

ON a typical afternoon there's usually half a dozen or so student types scattered about the shop, each held captive by a book or note pad. The customers, however, are an eclectic mix of students, working folks, and out of town visitors. As Bill explains, "We have plenty of regular customers, all types of people. They know they can come here and do what they enjoy. We have writers, chess players, even artists that come to draw or paint. We try not to cater to a certain crowd. That's what a coffee shop's all about."

Jennie, a regular weekend customer, agrees: "The atmosphere isn't phony, not as cliquish as a lot of places. If you sit her for half an hour, you'll find someone to talk to. Besides, the cake's delicious;; the brownies, sinful!" Indeed, the pastries and beverages are especially delicious. "All our baked goods are delivered daily from a local bakery, guaranteed fresh and appetizing," says Bill. A glass canister chock full of palm-sized raisin cookies invites all to test his sincerity. The true litmus test of a coffee shop, however, is ;the quality of its coffee. "Our house blend has seven different types of South American beans in it," he announces proudly. [Continued on p. 4]

1-800 - 308-4300 Microfilm

Depot Town Association, Inc., 21 October 1993


DTA: Firmly rooted in the past - with a clear view forward!

Vice President Tommy Steele hosted the meeting at The Daily Grind and President Judi Monaghan chaired the meeting.

The minutes of the September meeting were read and approved as published.

Treasury holds neary $8800.00 with all Frog Island Festival responsibilities met. Historic Depot Town Foundation's state registry has been up-dated. No invoice has yet been received for the Heritage Jazz Competition and Tower Records has still not kept its committment for sponsorship.

Rag Report: Storytelling theme and new business hypes predominate the November issue. Depot Town's involvement in 'school reform' will be the December theme.

Depot Town T-shirt reprinting will be decided in November. Investigate sweatshirts prices and kids' sizes, too.

OLD BUSINESS:

Paul Fetters reported the DDA has notified the **caboose rehab contractor** to finish within thirty days or face consequences. Paul will cover the open windows with plastic. The question of left-over lumber from past projects remains to be considered.

DDA (Depot Town Downtown Development Authority) meets at The Daily Grind at 8 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month.

EMU parents weekend is October 24 with 1500 *Rags* handed to visitors as they disembark busses in the district.

Kiosk updates will be handled by President Monaghan and financed by DTA.

Should we dissolve the DTA? All agreed that it looked like a more viable possibility a month ago. Too many showed up this month to make it financially profitable.

Break-in and vandalism reported again at the Freighthouse. City is considering installing a 'noisy' alarm system.

NEW BUSINESS:

Victorial Holiday is set for Saturday December 4th. Tommy Steele and Sandy Hoag will send out a flyer of events. Possible late Friday night tie-ins are also proposed.

New Year Jubilee is planned to end 1993 with many events around Ypsilanti. Last year, the first in Ypsilanti, drew upwards of 3000 with more expected this time. Kalamazoo's and Birmingham's "First Night" concepts started this way, grew to become enormous events. DTA will help sponsor the Freighthouse musical double bill: WCC's Morris Lawrence and George Bedard. Volunteers are encouraged to help with the show.

Ypsi Street Rods Association is considering moving their annual show to the district. Previous years have seen only their kick-off event here, with DTA providing insurance and portable toilets. Negotiations continue with the city and DTA.

Winding River Gallery's Karen Brenner will **propose a brochure/flyer** for the district at the November meeting. Members discussed their successes with cable TV promotions.

Annual priorities were proposed, discussed and set. [See page one and do what you can to make them realities for the district.]

Next meeting is set for Cady's Grill, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, 18 November 1993. All interested parties are invited to particpate.

Grind flavor, continued from page 3 ...

Ethel, an avid coffee drinker,visits the shop daily, "There's no pressure to eat and get out, unlike so many restaurants posing as coffee shops. You can sit here as long as you want, talk to friends, or just admire the art," she says between sips of java.

Art is neatly displayed throughout the shop. "The art pieces we have are all done by local artists. Artists can display their work here for a month for free," Bill states, pointing to a rather zealous expressionist painting. "We try to give as many artists a chance as possible. If a work's sold, we do, of course , get a small commission," Surreal, wooden bird feeders and houses aptly called "Yard Art" are positioned on the small tables that e front of the shop. Each is a heady ;montage of wood, graffiti and errant paint. This blending of art and coffee is a profitable one: Most of the Yard Art pieces are marked "sold!" The art gives the place a parlor-like feel. there's a communal sense of belonging and sharing, and the art is a small hint that being on the fringe is no excuse for being marginalized. Poetry is showcased twice a month. "We have regular featured poets and an open reading session for those who feel the need," Bill relates. "We're also working on trying to get live acoustic music."

The Daily Grind's success lies in its honest, open approach toward bringing members of the community together. An expresso drinker and weekly customer, Matt, says, "I come here to relax and read the newspaper." His words meld with those from a trio of women discussing women's liberation at the front of the shop. One wonders if Thoreau might have broken his vows of meager indulgence, had he visited The Daily Grind. Populist ideals have never tasted so good.

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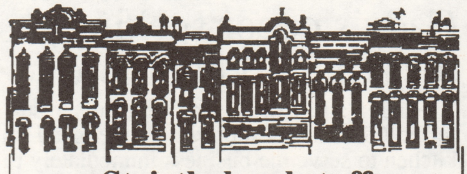

Strictly local stuff:

November1993

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

- **D'town Development Authority**
  8 a.m. Wednesday, 3rd
  at The Daily Grind
- **Depot Town Association**
  7:30 p.m. Thursday, 18th
  at Cady's Grill
- **Depot Town Antique Engine Club**
  7:30 pm Thursday, 25th
  at the Freighthouse
- **Victorian Holiday**
  All day Saturday, December 4th
  throughout the district & Market
- **Festival of Lights**
  Thanksiving' to New Year's Eve
  In Riverside Park

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate. -Tom Dodd, editor

The Depot Town Association, Inc.
Judi A. Monaghan, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

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Copies
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Resumés

Lets all give Thanks

Depot Doo
Fine Design in Hair Style
25 East Cross • 484-3045

November 13:
Pasta
Cooking Encounters
Different pasta flours
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
YPSI FOOD COOP
Sun. 12-5, M,T,Th, F 10-8 Wed. 10-9 Sat. 9-8
312 N. RIVER ST. 483-1520

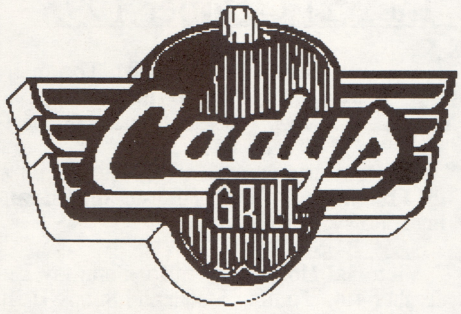
Cady's decor seeking local high school lore

Sandee and Bill French's recently resurrected Old Town Café will soon expand its kitchen to serve the business immediately to the west which will feature hometown high school heroes from just up the hill. Ypsilanti High School class and sports photos, awards and trophies are being solicited and Bill will "talk turkey" with anyone who wishes to donate or sell their old high school memories for the decor of the new establishment.

Like Ciro's and the Brown Derby, the walls of eating establishments often carry the memories of the folks to dine there, and Ypsi High's fondest memories are from the former football field (today's Frog Island Park) and just up the hill at the old high school building.

As the collection grows, so do the memories. Some say you don't even have to know the people in the class and sports team's pictures to get in on the fun. Discussions of hair styles, clothing, background and equipment seem to involve everyone in the place, and you can always hear at least one 'expert' who can name at least three people in every shot. "They haven't changed a bit," they lie, and all around them thank them for their kindness and good taste.

Interested possible donors of such memories are encouraged to call Bill at 483-2660 and



Cady's new/old is OK

Jane Schmiedeke, long-time member of Ypsilanti's Historic District Commission, was among those who gave approval to the earlier 'fakery' at the west bay, and now explains how such revisionist architectural history can be justified here: "The proposal we were given was to remove the new junk under the windows that wasn't original," says Jane. "Then they repeated the round medallion in the additions. I think it's been a very successful design project," she concludes, seeing as no one had pictures of the first window treatment..

New/old facade treatment appears at Cady's Grill

Not many years ago, after the Kornilakis family bought the space just west of their restaurant, some of locals got together and painted the old facade back on to the cement-blocked-up walls of that former storefront. They even commemorated it with a poem entitled "A Victorian Storefront is Missing." Then a mattress company moved in and painted it all over to look like a dirty ice cube. After almost two years in that spot, they left, but the grey walls continued to loom from the center of this old commercial district.

Last month, the new owners painted it a warm beige to 'book-end' their new Old Town Café to the east. Maybe the original facade will appear again, when warm weather returns.

The space between is where the unique decor appears this time: The west dining room will now be known as Cady's Grill, a family tavern specializing in "moderately priced seafood and pasta." "It'll have a friendly, hokey style," says Bill French. The space has already lost its 1920's grocery store look.

In a move toward still more Victoriana in this block, carpenter Bill Gustafson following Lis Knibbe's architectural plan, has added a shallow facade of panels and poles to create a storefront much in keeping with the traditional 19th century style so prevalent and popular in the rest of the block. In just a few years the casual passer-by will never guess that this commercial bay is not of the same vintage as its contiguous neighbors.

Cady name traced beyond usual district boundaries

Don't be fooled by the logo at district's newest attraction. Cady may date back to 1630 - and beyond!

Cady's Saloon was an early eatery and drinkery on this block and some of the old families will testify that the Cadys lived up the hill on the east side and were among the 'gentry' who dominated the hey-day of Depot Town as the commercial center of Our Town. "Cady is our old family name," says Thada (Teddy) Liskow, the oldest member of the Ypsilanti Players - the local community theater company which celebrated it's seventy-eighth year with the production of "Murder on Opening Night" last month. Teddy's not nearly that old, of course, but she relates much neighborhood history through her intense and unique point of view.

Nicholas Cady came from England to Waterbury, Massachusetts in 1630, a full ten generations before Teddy worked with the Ypsi Players. In their seventh generation in America, George Washington Cady operated Cady's Saloon at 52 East Cross. Last summer's hype for the Heritage Fest may have confused his issue with Ma Bush's nefarious establishment at that location was attributed to the Cady family. That was Ma Bush - not Ma Cady - hanging her head out the third floor window of in the old photo of the Ypsilanti Cornet Band posing in their wagon in the 1890s. Ma's establishment may have been an imbibing parlor on the ground floor, but nefarious goings-on were legend in her upper stories. She certainly wasn't a Cady; let's get that straight right now!

There's a Cady School in Wayne, most likely named for George Washington Cady's schoolteacher daughter who taught there. Find out for sure, and Bill French will probably hang the family history on the wall of his new restaurant by that name.

Thada Liskow's mom was a Cady, later married a Thornton, eventually was a Wilson. Thada and Charley Liskow's daughter is still a Cady, however, with that being her first name - in order to stablize a great family name with a female. Cady Bauer, now living in Stockbridge, is known where she works at Ann Arbor's Stadium Hardware as the town's "Most Beautiful Hardwarian." Such local warmth and foolishness seem to follow the tradition of old famliy businesses and sturdy local stock.

The Cady name has a whole 'nother meaning to Bill French, who has opened yet another establishment in this old district. *Cady Street* was where he and his bothers and sister grew up in Northville - another charming small town venue not far from his current investments. Local geneologists may be able to prove that's the same family line and may well be able to follow it back to trace them back to Nicholas in Massachusetts.

As with most of the block's history, the clientele can pick and choose which parts they wish to own. Cady's, to most of us, just sounds like something comfortable and home-townish. A place where we fit in just fine - for whatever reasons, whether we wish to share the justification, or not.

Welcome back to the old neighborhood, Cady. Stop in at the new place, and tell your story for the edification of all the new folk who've been showing up around here since 1630.

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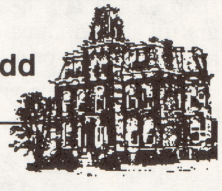
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"French Connection" symbolic of years of family tradition

Future historians need not be confused if we record it here:

Although Ypsi's south-siders proudly connect to the "French Claim" of the Louies of France, Depot Town's claims to that name only date back to the **Alibi Bar**. In 1969, Aubrey French bought and ran the railroad tavern which had been in that spot since 1873. The family lived in Northville and the kids - Gerry, Billy, Linda, Skip and David - all hung out there in their college years. It made a positive imprint on them about the business of business.

When dad retired, Gerry and Bill bought the bar. They later changed the name to **The Oliver House** and finally to **Aubree's Saloon**.

During that same time, daughter Linda had opened the **Depot Exchange**, the first antique store in the neighborhood.

Then Linda moved across the street and opened the **Sidetrack Bar & Grill** which quickly became known throughout southeastern Michigan for its excellent hamburgers.

Bill expanded to an upstairs jazz room,which later became a pool parlor called **Sticks**. A second-floor **dining deck** area was added after that.

Next, Linda - with younger brother David - opened their spot to a charming **track-side patio**. Then she closed her antique shop and started plans for an expansion of the Sidetrack concept. That's still in the works.

The next development was when Bill and wife Sandee bought and redeveloped the **Old Town Café**. Now they're expanding that venture into yet another restaurant called **Cady's**.

It's a family tradition that has grown in this block since its earliest entrepreneurs: first with Benjamin Follett and Mark Norris and their progeny - and now with the Miller, Robine, Barron, Hansen, and French families.

That's the way it works down in Ypsi's old railroad district.

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